

**Testimony of Robert Page, LCSW, BCD**  
**Executive Director, Hannah Gray Home**  
**H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE**  
**THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services Public Hearing, February 16, 2017

*concerning*

Department of Social Services Budget- Residential Care Home Funding

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Senator Flexer, Senator Markley, Rep. Dillon and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services, my name is Robert Page. I am proud and privileged to serve as the chief administrator of the Hannah Gray Home and a member of the Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding residential care home funding. The Governor's budget once again caps residential care home rates. Although there is a growing need in Connecticut for residential care for our aging population, our reimbursement rates have been frozen since 2010. As the model of care for Connecticut's aging population—one of the largest in the country—this literally translates into a threat to the viability of the value that residential care brings to one of Connecticut's most vulnerable and at risk populations.

Residential care homes are not medical facilities. We do not have medically trained and licensed staff. We do not have the equipment found in medical clinics and other medical provider settings. We do provide an environment, not a HOME, for the mothers, fathers and family members of Connecticut's communities throughout the entire state. Family members have told me how remarkably well their brothers, fathers, sisters, and mothers have done in a HOME environment, with an emphasis on independence and dignity. Aging in place, what Hannah Gray had in mind when she took indigent Negro Women into her home in the 1860's, is the basic mission of the CARCH family. Aging in Place is the quality of life, the dignity, the dose of compassion that sustains and strengthens our residents. Hannah Gray, located in the historic district of New Haven on Dixwell Avenue has 20 beds to offer the community. In total, residential care homes serve about 3,000 residents across Connecticut, with about a 95% Census Level of which about 94% are state funded beds- limiting our ability to cost shift.

A history of Hannah Gray viewed through pictures reflects a commitment to the core value of Aging in Place. *Today's mounting challenges, borne out through this legislative process, give pause when viewing the same pictures. The legislative line items point to the need for increased services that address complex housing, family, emotional and physical health concerns. Pictures of our population through the years reflect these same concerns—the common denominator being Aging in Place. The infrastructure challenges point out the need for upgrades and safety features, like sprinkler systems, ramps, handicap accessible showers and tubs—all put in place to keep our residents safe and thriving. Imagine adding an additional 10, 20, or 30 people to your home. As enjoyable as the coming and going from the home may be, the wear and tear is significantly greater and requires constant and diligent attention. Frozen rates have given rise to unattended projects and neglected upgrades. We all know scenarios where our roads have suffered neglect and the deeply unfortunate sequelae that are apt to arise from that neglect. Additionally, we forgo staff training and development, both of which are the heart and soul of residential care. We recruit and train the best people for the job, and then ask more from them, without the needed support through training. Another of our core values is the trust with which resident families look to us when admitting a family member to our homes. Frozen funds undermine and forsake much needed training about the Aging in Place process. Compassion is a prerequisite for all employees, but training unlocks that compassion in effective and hope inspiring ways.*

CARCH understands the difficult decisions that need to be undertaken in this budget but would urge the committee to consider the impact of the budget on residential care homes, our employees and some of

the most vulnerable citizens in the state. Our industry cannot continue to progress without the full support of the state.

Without residential care homes the overwhelming majority of our residents would be served in a much more costly environment- nursing homes, hospitals or return to homeless shelters where many of the Hannah Gray Home residents originated..

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Robert Page, LCSW, BCD  
Executive Director  
Hannah Gray Home  
235 Dixwell Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06511



(203) 907-4052 Tel (203) 907-4057 Fax